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The Compulsory Teaching of Temperance in Schools.

Will you please explain your position clearly, Mr. Rama Ayyar? You wanted to say something.

Mr. K. S. RAMA AYYAR.

Sir, I said last evening that I had something to say about the resolution that was about to be accepted by the Government. Ever since I saw the statement of business with this resolution against the name of Mr. Nunez, a schoolmaster himself, I have been wondering why he thought it necessary to move it at all. What he wants is that Temperance must be compulsorily taught in all the schools of the State, and he also wants that his idea should take the form of a resolution passed by the Legislative Council of the State. I am seriously of opinion that this resolution is redundant and, if passed by the Council, will reflect discredit on the schoolmasters of the State. You can, therefore, see that I was against the resolution from the beginning. And after the mover's speech, in which he laid stress on the drink habit alone, I have nothing to say in favour of the resolution.

As far as I know, Temperance generally means moderation in the indulgence of natural appetites and passions, and in a restricted sense, it means moderation in the habit of drinking alcoholic liquors. The member has made it clear that what he aims at is the teaching of Temperance in the particular sense. I do not understand why he is so very partial to temperance in drinking, when there are ever so many things included in the general meaning of the word "Temperance" or "Indulgence" all of which is equally injurious. Boys are often spoiled, sometimes even rendered absolutely useless, owing to their ignorance, and want of proper guidance in all these matters. For instance, fancy for a moment what amount of havoc is done by the tea-habit. Doctors have begun to say that "tea is more harmful than toddy". I would request the doctors here to endorse this statement, if they too hold the same view.

PRESIDENT.

Is it so, Dr. Verghese?

DIWAN BAHADUR Dr. V. VERGHESE.

I have not to say so.

Dr. A. G. MENON.

Neither do I say so.

Dr. A. R. MENON.

Doctors are ignorant about it as he himself.

PRESIDENT.

Mr. Rama Ayyar, I don't think it can be taken as an accepted position.

Mr. K. S. RAMA AYYAR.

I only say that doctors have begun to say so. There are doctors with this opinion.

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

In the word "Temperance" only alcoholic drinks are included.

PRESIDENT.

Mr. Rama Ayyar, you wanted to emphasise that, in the circular issued by the Director of Public Instruction, attention should be drawn to the evil habit of drinking.

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

"Temperance" as ordinarily understood means only "അമിതം ഉപയോഗം".

PRESIDENT.

Mr. Rama Ayyar, please continue.

Mr. K. S. RAMA AYYAR.

Then, how many are the boys that are spoiled by the filthy habit of cigarettes? Here is what a famous doctor says about the habit:—

"When acquired early, it excites the undeveloped organs, arouses the passions, and in a few years converts the once chaste and pure youth into a veritable volcano of lust". The evil effect of sweet-meats on youths are none the less. And most of all, there is the story of the pitfalls in the matter of the sexual passions and the consequences thereof, which is hard to relate. Sexual science is kept a sealed book, and is considered by several people to be a forbidden subject. And very few people have the boldness to talk about it. But how many are the men that cry out in their heart-rending agonies "Oh! if I had got this knowledge in my early days"! Let the doctors say why so many young men that come out of schools and colleges have dull, lifeless eyes, hollow, sunken cheeks, weak spines, rotten teeth and scanty hair. I am sure they will certify that these are all the after effects of tea, cigarettes, sweet-meats or sexual dissipation. There are several such things that boys at school must be taught, and all these come under the generic term "Temperance". In these circumstances, why should one lay so much emphasis on the liquor habit, which is only one among

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so many other things. It deserves prominent mention that in our State the liquor habit is the least present of all the temptations that boys at school fall in. I can boldly say that cases of boys at school getting drunk are rare, if not nil, whereas excesses will very frequently be met with in the matter of cigarettes, sweat-meats, tea, and—excuse me for introducing a usually untouched subject—sexuality. As such, may I ask the Hon'ble Member what has induced him to give so much prominence to the liquor habit, and whether an emergency has arisen, within his experience, justifying an intervention by the Legislative Council? He says that *steps must be taken*, and that, early as possible, to teach Temperance. He wants it only with reference to the habit of drink, and that Temperance should be compulsorily taught. His wording of the resolution tempts me to think that there is something wrong somewhere. I ask where is it, and what is it?

The next thing is I say that this resolution is redundant. I say that this is redundant, because there is already a circular directing that moral instruction should be given to the pupils, and that circular covers all these things and much more.

Again, I say that, if this resolution is passed here, it will reflect discredit on the schoolmasters of the State. For, as a matter of fact, the instruction contemplated by the resolution with instruction on so many allied items is given in every school and by every teacher. Although Temperance was not inserted in the syllabus of studies as a separate subject, the instruction was going on even before the circular as a matter of course. I was a schoolmaster myself for more than twenty years, and I speak from my experience of schools and schoolmasters. All this sort of instruction comes under character-building. Building up the character of the pupils is one of the chief responsibilities of a schoolmaster, and it is his business to find out what lessons he should give to effectively discharge this responsibility. The details are generally left to the discretion of the teachers, as it is a very difficult matter to prescribe lessons for this purpose. In the course of several of their lessons, the teachers very often get opportunities to talk about the ingredients of character, and the evil consequences of bad habits and so on, and to tell stories to illustrate what they talk about. If charts and other accessories are available, and found necessary, they must be supplied and made use of. These will, of course, help a good deal to make lasting impressions. I may also point out that Arnold's wall charts and magic lantern slides are the best for the purpose. When all this is meant by the circular already

in force, and when, as a matter of fact, teachers do give instruction in such matters, where is the necessity for the resolution, and will it not be discreditable to the honourable profession, if we go and tell them to do a thing that they are already doing and have been doing for the past so many years, implying thereby that they are not doing it, or not doing it properly?

I have also to add that, in the matter of character-building, it is well-known and universally admitted that example is better than any amount of precept. (*Hear, hear.*) What is, therefore, needed is that the Department of Education should always see that only men of sterling character and clean habits are entertained as teachers; and if this is carefully done, the task is very easy, and the necessity will not arise for the Legislative Council to interfere in matters of detail.

As the Hon'ble mover says, propaganda against the drink habit is necessary, but I only say that the school house is the place where it is least needed—at least, as far as the schools of the State are concerned, because the vice is completely absent from our schools.

I am strongly of opinion that no measure should be introduced unless and until the necessity is proved. In this case, as the necessity for such a measure is not proved, and no emergency has arisen, the resolution cannot and need not be considered here. And, on principle, I object to any circular being issued on the basis of the resolution.

PRESIDENT.

Have you any information to give to the House as to whether any circular has been issued to the effect that moral instruction should be given in all schools?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

It is in the Code itself, Sir, as I explained yesterday; in the revised Code we have introduced a clause which I read out yesterday.

"Provision shall be made for imparting moral instruction in schools, attendance being optional. These classes shall be held once a week during the first or the last period."

At the Head-masters' Conference last year, the question whether moral instruction should be given was discussed, and the insertion of the amended clause was recommended by the Conference and sanctioned by the Government.

We felt that something ought to be done to impart systematic moral education, and we passed a resolution to that effect.

But in the Conference there was a difference of opinion. Certain Head-masters said :—"After all, if you make it compulsory in all classes, is it going to bring about really beneficial results?" What is absolutely necessary is that those who teach the lessons must be earnest, and believe in what they teach, and as Mr. Rama Ayyar pointed out, the most important factor of all is the personality of the teacher. So we finally resolved that it need only be introduced in schools, where Head-masters felt confident that such instruction, if imparted, would be really beneficial. Where conditions were found to be favourable, it might be left to the option of the Head-master to impart systematic moral instruction in the school. We made that recommendation which was accepted by the Government, and a correction slip was accordingly issued.

PRESIDENT.

When was it?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

More than a year ago, and it is still in force. The matter is left to the option of the Head-masters now.

Mr. I. E. AMBOOKAN.

To the option of the students as well.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

No. Left to the option of the authorities.

PRESIDENT.

Should it not be given a sort of compulsion?

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

They did not feel that real good would be promoted by compulsion. There may be teachers who could not do it in a satisfactory way. If we make it a mere routine, no good will result. On the other hand, it may have bad effects. So the teacher should have a real interest in the work. If it is made routine work, they will make a parody of the thing.

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

If this objection is pressed to its logical conclusion, then the religious instruction given in schools and from pulpits may have to be stopped also; because there may be clergymen who make a routine of their work.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

The world may be none the worse, if such men go out.

PRESIDENT.

Have you any objection to issue a circular that in all schools moral lessons should be given at a stated period. It is

a matter relating to moral lessons; moral lessons include Temperance. At present it is optional. Mr. Nunez's proposition is to make it compulsory. We must take the sense of the Council upon this question.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

Shall I read from the Report of the Code Revision Committee about moral instruction?

"No question was discussed with greater earnestness than the one relating to moral instruction in schools. There could be no divergence of opinion as to the supreme importance of imparting moral training to children so as to bring them to an understanding of right principles of conduct and to implant in them convictions strong enough to adhere to those principles. Even those who take a merely utilitarian view of education will concede that the formation of character is the highest function of a school—higher than the acquisition of knowledge or the training of the intellect. It was urged by some of the members that the great majority of our children do not receive either in school or at home, any direct instruction calculated to inculcate principles of morality, and that the deplorable consequences of such a condition of things are but too apparent. Others pointed out that there are means available even now for the willing teacher to impress moral truths on his pupils. The readers used in schools contain stories, biographical and didactical lessons that will be utilised for purposes of moral instruction. History is largely concerned with the lives and doings of great men and women who could be held up as inspiring models for the young. There is the strengthening, which comes from the emotions, and the will being worked upon by the histories of great movements, the lives of great men, and the songs of great poets. Without direct ethical teaching, moral ideas are unconsciously imbibed from the healthy atmosphere of a school; and its corporate life, by a variety of means, affords opportunities of moral training. The popularity of the Boy Scout movement is a happy sign of the times, since its development on right lines is calculated to supply some of the glaring deficiencies of the present educational system, by creating activities outside school, suited to young people for organised and disciplined action, and for social service. Besides affording a training in citizenship, it teaches a boy self-help and thrift, and sharpens his powers of observation. As a certain writer observes: 'the scout's law of service, of self-sacrifice, of chivalry, of cleanliness of mind and body, of skill of mind and hand, is the exact counter-part for childhood of the ancient *Jus Gentium* for Universal manhood,

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"The personality of the teacher is an essential and perhaps the most important factor, and where this is lacking, little good could be expected from class teaching. A great deal might be done by a genuine and sympathetic teacher who knew how to touch the responsive chord in children. But if the teaching was allowed to become stale and flat and a mere matter of routine, the effect on the children might perhaps be worse than, if no such teaching had been attempted.

"Next to the personality of the teacher, it is the discipline and the prevailing tone of the school that contribute to the moulding of character. The following words from an educational writer may be apposite:

'Morality divorced from the spiritual impulse has always found to miss compelling force, to lack life and vigour. Morals can be taught by reference to self-advantage; they can be justified, though only imperfectly, by an appeal to the intellect; they can be fortified by fostering the love of approbation and the social sense; the love of beauty and fitness is a powerful aid to the teacher; but ultimately, sound morality is a healthful condition of the soul. It would be an impertinence to suggest methods to the teacher; if things are right with himself, he will find his own methods, his own avenues of spiritual approach.'

"The view was also expressed that moral instruction would be ineffectual when dissociated from religion, but the conditions of many of our schools precluded instruction based directly upon religion. This does not however, necessarily mean that it is cut off from all appeal to what is most morally persuasive in religion.

"The true essence of belief, as far as morals are concerned, is that God is on the side of righteousness. This it is which gives effective power to religion as a motive to morality. The appeal to this fundamental faith is not denied to the teacher on a purely secular basis of education. This belief involves no theological dogma and offends no religious susceptibilities. The appeal is, therefore, always within the secular teacher's discretion.'

"However, in the opinion of the majority of the members the introduction of direct moral instruction in schools was an imperative necessity, and even the risk of a failure should not deter us from making a move in a matter so vitally concerned with the well-being of our children. The Rev. Father Dominic

pointed out that, in the case of Catholic pupils, moral instruction by non-Catholic teachers would not be acceptable, and that, therefore, attendance at these classes should be optional. This was agreed to.

"The introduction of direct moral teaching by means of a moral text-book was advocated by the Education Commission of 1882, but it raised a great deal of controversy, and no definite course has yet been laid down in this respect in British India. In Mysore moral instruction has been introduced into schools as a part of the regular curriculum, and the following guarded statement appears in their latest report regarding the results of the experiment.

"Adequate provision has been made for moral instruction in the present curriculum. It is not easy to pronounce a judgment on the manner in which this is taught or on the effects which it has produced. In regard to the formation of proper habits, school life and organisation, the discipline of the class room, of the athletic field, of the scout troop, of the literary society and of the hostel are of special value, and in these respects the progress made especially in recent years has been satisfactory—there is no ground for a pessimistic view or outlook'.

"Perhaps there is no country where systematic formal instruction in 'morals' is given from the lowest classes in schools, as is done in Japan. But whether it has made the Japanese a pre-eminently moral nation is a matter on which opinions may differ."

"If direct moral teaching is to be introduced in schools, it goes without saying that the utmost care should be exercised in the selection of teachers who are to be entrusted with the work. Unless they can command the respect and regard of their pupils, the instruction that they impart will not be productive of good results. The Education Commission of 1882 laid great stress on moral education. As regards Primary Schools, they suggest 'that all inspecting officers and teachers be directed to see that all the teaching and discipline of every school are such as to exert a right influence on the manner and conduct and the character of the children'. Of Secondary Schools they say 'that the importance of requiring inspecting officers to see that the teaching and discipline of every school are such as to exert a right influence on the manners the conduct and the character of pupils be reaffirmed'. For Colleges they recommend 'lectures on the duties of a man and a citizen' and a moral text-book. In

connection with the last suggestion, a well-known educationist of North India says :

“ These addresses should in a broad sense be lay sermons. A principal who is not full to overflowing with thoughts for such addresses can have very imperfectly realised the obligations and privileges of his position. If, in particular cases and for exceptional reasons, he feels unable to take on himself this responsibility, he may delegate the function to such members of the staff as are fitted to discharge it. There is some loss of efficiency, if the head of a College speaks by deputy, but the essential point is that there should be regular addresses, and these addresses should concern themselves with the students' present surroundings and responsibilities. If the student learns aright the lesson of his duties as a student, there will be no question later on as to his recognition of what is due from him as a man and a citizen. Addresses need not be very frequent, better not. Once or twice in a year should suffice ; but there can be no hard and fast line drawn. Along with such direct and solemn incentives to right doing, the most potent instrument of moral education is good rules of discipline considerably imposed and firmly enforced.’

“What is suggested here for Colleges might apply to schools as well.

“ Religious instruction of some kind or other is provided in several of our aided schools. In Catholic schools the catechism is taught to children of the Catholic persuasion, and they attend prayers at stated hours. In the C. M. S. schools regular instruction is given based on the Christian scriptures. In the Vivekodayam School at Trichur, the day's work begins and closes with prayer, and moral instruction is given, based on Hindu Puranic stories. Ultimately, it is to private and voluntary agencies and the influences of home, more than to Governmental activities, that we must look for the instilling of those moral principles which derive their highest support from the dictates of religion. ”

That was the recommendation made, and in accepting that recommendation this clause was inserted. “ Provision shall be made for imparting moral instruction, attendance being optional. These classes shall be held once a week during the first or last period. ” — “ Inoperative, pending final orders of Government. ”

PRESIDENT.

Attendance is optional.

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

The provision is for compulsory attendance with regard to moral teaching and not with regard to Temperance.

PRESIDENT.

Under moral instruction, it will come.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

Moral teaching is not compulsory in schools. Rev. Father Dominic said that in Catholic schools it need not be made compulsory, because of special reasons.

PRESIDENT.

Then, Mr. Nunez, do you want the discussion to proceed?

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

I find that the main issue of the resolution under discussion is clouded by the opposition of Mr. Rama Ayyar. So I don't know what attitude the Government will take up in the light of the objections raised by Mr. Rama Ayyar.

PRESIDENT.

"Pending final orders"—you have got it in the circular.

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

That relates only to the imparting of moral instruction.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

Subsequent to the Head-masters' Conference of last year, orders have been passed.

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

Moral instruction covers a wide range, and owing to the multitude of the subjects that come under it, sufficient importance may not be given to Temperance. In Madras it is clear that the necessity for teaching Temperance was felt by the Department of Education as early as 1906, but it is to be regretted that we have not done anything so far.

PRESIDENT.

Should the resolution be further discussed, Mr. Nunez?

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

I want an assurance to the effect that teachers would be asked to take sufficient interest in the teaching of this subject, and that the department will provide suitable lessons on Temperance both in the Vernacular and English text-books. That much, at least I wish, should be done in the initial stage.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

What I undertook to do yesterday was that I would issue a circular to the effect that Temperance should be given a definite place in the curriculum of Moral Instruction, and that would meet Mr. Rama Ayyar's objection.

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

Temperance should be given a definite place in the curriculum.

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PRESIDENT.

Temperance covers the evil of drink.

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

Also magic lantern lectures be should on Temperance given whenever possible.

PRESIDENT.

That is a matter of detail.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

I would like to say a few words about juvenile smoking which was referred to by Mr. Rama Ayyar. For juvenile smoking there is already legislation. If a boy is found smoking, we can take criminal action against him. In schools we punish such boys. But there is no legislation against the evil of drink, because the position is different. Smoking is a special temptation of children, whereas it is not so in the case of drinking. Children are not addicted to drink. They are only potential drunkards. So we have got to see that the evils of drink are impressed upon children, so that when they become responsible men with spare cash in their hands, they may not spend it in that way. It is only among depressed classes, as far as my experience goes, that children are found drinking. They do not observe any distinction of age or sex in this matter. You see father, mother, sons and daughters, all sitting together and imbibing from a common pot. I do not think that sort of thing is found among other people. So far as this question is concerned, we have only to put children on the guard so that later on, when they grow up, they may not take to drink.

PRESIDENT.

Temperance should be given a definite place in the curriculum of Moral Instruction in schools. We have not made it compulsory.

Mr. C. MATTHAI.

And then, Mr. Rama Ayyar referred to sexual morality. In teaching these things, we have to see that we do not make a parody of what is most serious. When I was a Head-master, I wanted to give definite instruction on this subject. After a little time, because I found that some teachers could not rouse that atmosphere of seriousness so essential to successful teaching, I had to stop such lessons.

PRESIDENT.

Do you want the resolution to be discussed further, Mr. Nunez?

Mr. S. F. NUNEZ.

On the assurance given by the Member that early steps would be taken by the department I withdraw the resolution.

Leave was given to withdraw the resolution.

PRESIDENT.

The next resolution is the one that is standing in the name of Mr. C. A. Kunjunni Raja. I now ask him to move the resolution.

Malayalam to be the Medium of Proceedings in Government Offices and Courts.

Mr. C. A. KUNJUNNI RAJA.

Sir, I beg to move that

"This Council recommends that the Malayalam language be made the medium of all proceedings in all Government Offices and the Courts of the State, including arguments, judgments, etc., and of all Government communications except those with the paramount power."

Sir, in moving this resolution, at the very outset, I may preface that it is not my intention to cry down the English language, which is a world-wide one with a wide and extensive literature, and which is full of life and noble inspirations; but my attempt is to take stock of the situation of our people, and see how far it is for our welfare to carry on the administration of our State in a tongue which is Greek to many of our people, and which heavily retards our natural growth.

The civilisation and culture of a race come out most vividly in its language. Kerala, as distinct from the neighbouring Dravidian and the distant Aryan types of India, is a land which displayed and even now displays much originality in its varied aspects such as Literature, Arts, Sociology and Government. Its language is the evolutionary embodiment of its unique character, and has to be preserved in the best interests of the Rulers and the ruled, lest it might become a thing of forgotten history. Pious wishes and institutions like "the Vernacular Improvement Committee" can do very little appreciable good, so long as Malayalam is given a secondary place in the Cochin Educational Department, and the Cochin Services are manned by persons who are versed more in English than in their mother tongue.

Good old times there were when the defence and administration of the country were managed by our ancestors who did everything beautifully without help from foreign languages or